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Related Documents	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Health and Safety Policy Public Liability Insurance Data Protection Policy Protected Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy Social Media Guidance/Policy Gifts and Hospitality Expenses Policy Problem Solving Procedure Volunteering Charter
Training and Awareness	Policy published on the Intranet. Included in staff Induction policy reading. Included in Induction for new volunteers. Shared through internal comms channels to staff and volunteers

1) Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to:
- Clarify the purpose and benefits of engaging members as volunteers at the RTPI.
- Ensure that everyone involved in the organisation including Board Members, staff and volunteers understand and value volunteers' involvement.
- Outline the current standard Volunteer Journey for the whole organisation to ensure we deliver a positive volunteering experience and volunteers have a consistent experience.

Our Vision for Volunteering

In relation to the experience of volunteering at the RTPI, we envisage an RTPI where;
- We are a great place for members to volunteer, and opportunities attract a diversity of people to give their time.
- Volunteers are positively engaged and feel valued as part of the RTPI family.
- We deliver a sector leading volunteering experience, through processes and ways of working, which make it enjoyable and easy to support us.

Our Commitment to Volunteering

Our [Volunteering Charter](#) recognises that the RTPI's volunteers are active, engaged members who share our vision for the planning profession and ambitions for the RTPI. They help to shape the success of the Institute by supporting the delivery of our activities for the benefit of the wider membership, our members' communities, and the organisation itself. The charter highlights our commitment to each other; as volunteers offer us so much and help us achieve our aims, we want to ensure that volunteers also gain from their experience of volunteering.

2) **Strategic Aims and Objectives**

Professional volunteering is one of the foundations of the 2020-2030 [Corporate Strategy](#), where we commit to "supporting members by providing tools, processes and learning opportunities to ensure that we improve the experience for all existing and future volunteers". Volunteering development is also an aspect of the Project One Institute work. This seeks to build a collaborative culture, take a member first approach and value our volunteers. Having a Volunteering Policy that sets out our approach to volunteer engagement is part of delivering this.

[The Volunteering Strategy](#) sits alongside the Corporate Strategy and outlines why the involvement of volunteers is a fundamental principle of the RTPI.

1. "Volunteers offer direct member insights of planning and provide invaluable professional expertise and perspectives;
2. Volunteers add the Institute's capacity to achieve our strategic objectives and to add value to our membership proposition.
3. The development and maintenance of our regional and national networks is vital to creating a strong RTPI community and enabling knowledge exchange and peer support;
4. There is a personal benefit to our members by being involved in volunteering, such as career enhancement, CPD recognition, a broader professional network, or a sense of personal satisfaction; and
5. Our members' local communities and professional networks value the involvement of RTPI volunteers through delivery of direct public support services."

RTPI volunteers make a significant contribution to the work we do and play a vital role in achieving the RTPI's vision and mission. Whilst benefiting the RTPI, we hope that volunteers themselves gain personally from their involvement. The RTPI is committed to volunteering being a positive and enriching experience for all those who chose to get involved. Volunteering is open to everyone, and the Institute believes that every member has something to offer.

3) Definitions

The NCVO (National Council for Voluntary Organisations) define volunteering as:

> '…any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives. Central to this definition is the fact that volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual. This can include formal activity undertaken through public, private and voluntary organisations as well as informal community participation and social action. Everyone has the right to volunteer and volunteering can have significant benefits for individuals.'

Volunteers at the RTPI

Volunteers at the RTPI may not consider themselves to be 'volunteers'. RTPI volunteers are active members who volunteer their time and expertise in a professional capacity for the RTPI. In the Corporate Strategy this is referred to as 'professional volunteering' acknowledging that participation contributes to the wider profession. Broadly there are currently a few ways that people volunteer their time, outlined below.

- Trustees of the Board are legally volunteers and have additional legal responsibilities as part of their role.
- Committees – members get involved in their local or national committees or committees representing an area of RTPI work, such as International. Roles can vary from member to Honorary Secretary, Vice Chair and Chair.
- Special Interest – many members chose to volunteer in an area that's of interest to them, such as Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) Assessors, Education Ambassadors or Planning Aid England.
- Ad hoc volunteering – A significant contribution is made by members who give their time for a discreet activity. This may mean speaking at an event, undertaking outreach activity or joining a working group or task and finish group.
- Young Planners – Those in the first ten years of their career are actively involved in the work of the RTPI through Young Planners groups in a variety of ways.
- Networks - Members who participate in our networks are not considered to be volunteers but those in positions such as Chair of a network are.

4) Policy Scope

The scope of this policy relates to all active volunteers within the RTPI as defined in section 3, setting out clearly what volunteers can expect when they give their time to the RTPI.

The Volunteer Journey

This section outlines the *current* standard volunteer journey at the RTPI. This represents a minimum standard for the experience we want to offer. Work related to the strategy has defined what we *want* the volunteer Journey to be like and this is included in Appendix 1.

Stage 1: Thinking about Volunteering

As mentioned, there is a diverse array of roles for volunteers from governing the RTPI, maintaining our professional standards, promoting planning to future generations, helping people participate in the planning system and speaking at CPD events. Information on the opportunities is on the [website](). Not all roles are open to everyone as some require chartered members and some require an academic affiliation, and this will be made clear on the role description when opportunities are promoted. Members are also encouraged to contact us to discuss developing new opportunities that will benefit both the volunteer and the RTPI.

To achieve our vision for volunteering, staff consider if and how to involve volunteers in their work and potential volunteers will be sought from all parts of our membership. A variety of promotional and recruitment methods will be used to attract a diversity of individuals with different skills and experience to bring.

Role descriptions for each role outline the objectives of the role, what's involved, what's expected of the volunteer and the key contact for the role. Potential volunteers are asked to complete an application form or apply as part of the election process. Selection is then dependant on the role and this is made clear as part of the application process. Successful applicants are notified of the next steps and unsuccessful applicants are directed to other RTPI opportunities that are available.

Stage 2: Getting Started

All new volunteers are provided with an organisational induction about the RTPI, our aims, objectives and activities and a copy of the Welcome to Volunteering handbook. Volunteers will also be provided with role specific induction and training as required and any relevant materials or guidance documents. This will ensure that volunteers feel confident to get started and employees know that volunteers have a good level of understanding.,

Volunteers will be introduced to relevant employees, other volunteers and if relevant, shown around the workplace in which they'll be based. This will cover any housekeeping and health and safety requirements.

We are committed to maintaining a safe working environment for everyone. Staff and active members are expected to take reasonable care to ensure their own safety and that of other people who may be affected by their actions. The RTPI has a duty of care for volunteers and further details are outlined in the Welcome to Volunteering Handbook.

Members are insured whilst actively volunteering for the RTPI, if they are acting in accordance with their role description, in a task agreed with their named contact person and in line with the volunteer handbook. RTPI has both public liability and professional indemnity insurance, and further details are outlined in the Welcome to Volunteering Handbook.

Stage 3: Day to Day

Support - Volunteers will have a named contact person/ key contact for the role in addition to the Volunteer Project Co-ordinator. This person will offer day to day support should it be needed. Depending on the role, volunteers will also be paired with a fellow volunteer 'buddy' as they get started and this person is there to help them navigate their first few months as a volunteer. Expenses will also be covered in line with the Expenses Policy.

Problem-Solving - We hope that volunteers will enjoy their time volunteering at the RTPI. Volunteers should speak to their named contact person or the relevant Chair in the first instance to resolve any concerns informally. There is a Problem-Solving procedure which can be found on the Volunteering Resources page of the [website](#). This offers support and guidance to volunteers who might want to raise a concern and for the RTPI to address any concerns with volunteers.

Reliability and Commitment - We hope that volunteers are reliable and able to stick to any commitments made with us. However, we understand that circumstances change, and we ask that volunteers let their named contact person know as soon as possible if they are unable to fulfil their role.

Volunteer Feedback - The Volunteer Project Co-ordinator will ensure there are opportunities for volunteers to reflect and share their thoughts on the delivery of their role and the wider organisation. This is at key stages, such as after Induction, on leaving a role and as part of a volunteer survey. We believe volunteers gain a unique insight into the RTPI and are therefore well placed to help us understand what we could do differently or better.

Celebrating Success - We want volunteer involvement to be outcomes focused so will seek to record their contribution and evaluate the difference that it has made. This will be shared with volunteers, staff and more widely. We will also thank volunteers as much as possible in both every day and in larger ways. A consistent way of recognising volunteers at key milestones in their volunteer journey will be developed as part of the work of delivering the Volunteering Strategy (see Appendix 1).

Stage 4: Progression and Endings

Some roles have a clear progression such as becoming Junior Vice Chair leads to Senior Vice Chair to Chair, then to immediate past Chair. For other volunteers, their experience is often organic as by getting involved in one role they become aware of others. In Appendix 1, the new Volunteer Journey commits to making progression routes clearer for all volunteers.

The RTPI understands that circumstance change, and volunteers can take a break or stop volunteering at any time. On occasion roles will change or only be available for a limited time, so will come to a natural end. We hope that volunteers will let us know when things change so alternative roles can be discussed. Opportunities to stay in touch will also be offered in case the volunteer wants to return and contribute in other ways in the future.

The RTPI will seek feedback when volunteer roles come to an end so we can develop the volunteering experience for future volunteers. The RTPI can provide a reference for volunteers on request.

5) Key Risks

On the RTPI risk register, R02 relates to Volunteer Fatigue and Attrition. This policy is part of our work to deliver the Volunteering Strategy by ensuring volunteer engagement is supported by the appropriate policies and procedures. Showing we value people's contribution by providing the right methods to support engagement is one aspect of reducing the likelihood of volunteer fatigue and attrition.

6) Responsibilities

Implementation of the Volunteer Strategy is identified as a key deliverable within the Corporate Strategy. The work is led by the Volunteer Project Co-ordinator. A Project Board of staff and a Volunteer Advisory Group of volunteers has been established to guide the work.

The Volunteering Policy sits alongside other organisational policies, procedures, the Welcome to Volunteering Handbook and Volunteering Charter to support the involvement of volunteers in the RTPI. They provide staff and volunteers the structure in which to operate.

As the Volunteer Journey, as identified in early 2022 and included in Appendix 1, is progressed, processes will be reviewed and developed for staff and volunteers to ensure consistency across the RTPI.

7) Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier as required.

Appendix 1 – The Volunteer Journey

In late 2021, early 2022 the staff project board and volunteer advisory group worked to define what the volunteer journey at the RTPI will look like. They were asked to consider, what is needed in order to offer a positive experience of volunteering at the RTPI. The 12-step journey outlined below is shaping the work of the Volunteer Project Officer, Staff Project Board and Volunteer Advisory group in delivering the next 1-2 years of the Volunteer Strategy.

Volunteer Journey Stage	Our offer / What to expect	What that means / our commitment	What we'll do
Thinking about volunteering	1 A great welcome!	People can find information on volunteering and know that all volunteers are valued at the RTPI.	Open to all (inclusive) Policies and procedures that enable involvement Accessible information
	2 Clear Roles and expectations of commitment and behaviour	Potential volunteers will gain a clear understanding of the Roles available. Such as why the role is important, what it will achieve, when and how to apply, what the likely time commitment is, and who to contact.	Roles that highlight Why we need it, what it will achieve from our Corporate Strategy, What skills are needed, what the time commitment is, how to apply and, who the contact person is for the role.
	3 Clear and consistent application process	Volunteers will have one way of applying to all volunteer roles at the RTPI. (with the exception of elected roles).	One system used for all volunteer roles. (elected roles will still use MiVoice)
Getting started	4 Clear next steps	We will guide volunteers through the process of getting started.	Communication about what to expect Initial dates for the diary Who to contact Connect with a buddy if appropriate
	5 Induction and Training	Volunteers will receive the induction and training they need to feel confident in their role.	Induction to the RTPI Training specific to the role Optional additional training
	6 Access to the Hub	Volunteers will be able to access the materials they need and connect with other volunteers.	Have the materials needed as an RTPI vol and for the role. Handbook, standard forms,
Day to day	7 Provide support	We will support volunteers to get the most out of their time with the RTPI	Check in with volunteers, PDP with vols (optional) Ops for peer support
	8 Thank volunteers	We will recognise volunteers for their contribution.	Consistent process of recognition
	9 Know the impact	The RTPI will better understand the impact of	Seek feedback at key stages After Induction

		vols and make sure that vols know how they make an impact	Through check ins Once a year to all vols On ending your role/vol
Progression and Endings	10 Link volunteering to CPD	Volunteers will know which roles (or aspects of a role) will allow them to gain CPD hours.	To be defined
	11 Clear opportunities for progression	Vols know what they can do next	Information on the website Staff Awareness
	12 Recognise endings	We're consistent with how we thank people at the end of a term or as they chose to stand down.	Part of the recognition process at stage 8